



# OPENING DOORS<sup>sm</sup>

A Prison Ministry

November 2005

## I Have Placed Before You An Open Door (Rev. 3:8)

A word from Deborah L. Roeger, Executive Director



In the October, 2005 Newsletter we introduced our readers to Stand In The Gap,<sup>tm</sup> Ohio and shared our excitement as we bring this work to Christian ex-offenders throughout the

state. In this month's Newsletter, I am excited to share the story of incredibly courageous woman who was surrounded by a spiritual family when she returned from prison and walks in faith and freedom today. We met Rhonda when we traveled to Tulsa and had the opportunity to talk with many of her spiritual family members. After meeting these brothers and sisters in Christ, each one of us left Tulsa with a very real, very personal understanding of how God transforms lives through His love. ♥

***It is the love of God expressed through the people of God that transforms lives.***

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**“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”** Psalm 40:2 (KJV)

I have been in the horrible miry pit of addiction. My first addiction began at 11 years old when I was introduced to valium by my soccer coach. For 25 years after that I switched from one addiction to another always looking for ways to change the way I was feeling. Because it was all about me, I did whatever I found pleasure in until the consequence was greater than the pleasure. The result of my addiction and my refusal to quit was that I left my children crying on December 8, 2000 as I went off to prison. I would like to say it was the first time I had left my children crying for me, but unfortunately more times than I care to remember I heard my children tearfully plead “mom please don't go.” I told them “meth was not more important to me,” but my actions told the truth. In April 2001, I went on Kairos walk #12 at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center in Oklahoma and the love of Christ changed my life.

***There is hope no matter where a person is or what they are going thru, if they will let Jesus be their hope.***

When I came out of prison fourteen months later, I went into transitional housing. Not long afterward, Eileen, an outside volunteer that I met at my Kairos table, introduced me to a ministry called Stand In The Gap<sup>tm</sup> which gave me a great support team. My SITG<sup>tm</sup> Spiritual Family walked beside me and prayed for me to grow in the Lord. I had many needs. I wanted my children with me. I needed drivers license, a job, a car, and housing

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## Prayers For Prisoners<sup>sm</sup>

A web of prayer across the state that will have no traceable beginning or end.

In March, Rev. Gary Sims, Religious Services Administrator for the Ohio prisons, handed me 3 large brown envelopes. “*What’s in them?*” I asked curiously? Peeking inside I saw hundreds of individual prayer slips from the women at Ohio Reformatory for Women. “*What am I suppose to do with them?*” I wondered? Because neither of us knew, we stopped and prayed in his office and Prayers For Prisoners<sup>sm</sup> was birthed, quickly becoming a growing part of the ministry services offered by Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> in the Ohio prisons. It’s very simple. I receive multiple brown envelopes weekly and distribute them to churches, individuals and prayer ministries who have a heart to pray for each written request individually. The result? Abundant blessings and miracles, but maybe not the type we would first assume. The miracles that have been consistently reported since the prayer web began to form is that the prayer warriors themselves are being blessed! ♥

**Important note:** If you know of an individual, prayer ministry or a church willing to become a part of this growing ministry, as we add more Ohio prisons, please contact Opening Doors for more information. Our incarcerated sisters in Christ are waiting for us to show we care. How will we respond? Only after we become equipped to handle all the women’s requests will we begin to invite prayer requests from the men’s prisons.

## Why does Stand In The Gap<sup>tm</sup> work?

By Barbara Saunders

**B**ecause we ask God to help and God helps.

**B**ecause we don’t limit God by presenting our list of demands, we offer up our need to see how God will meet that need.

**B**ecause we learn to trust and believe and listen to God’s whispers.

**B**ecause in learning to trust God we learn to trust ourselves and other people.

**B**ecause we believe we are safe.

**B**ecause we truly love one another without expectations and conditions.

**B**ecause we laugh, cry, worry, get angry, get motivated, and get going when we recognize we are all struggling with living our lives and because we do it together.

**B**ecause we all have our own particular talents and gifts and we share them with one another.

**B**ecause we do the best we can and it is good enough.

*Editor’s Note:* Next month you’ll get to meet Barbara through the miraculous story of how God gave her a Spiritual Family to help her through the tough transition from “surviving” after prison to becoming whole and living a “normal” life. Like so many of the men and women we have met in the Ohio prisons, Barbara is bright, well-educated and wonderfully gifted. We know you’ll enjoy hearing her story.

## God Is The Open Door At The End Of Our Broken Dreams

### *His Mercy, His Oasis*

**...For He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them. Isaiah 49: 10**

After serving approximately six years at Madison Correctional, my status was lowered and I was transferred to Richland Correctional Institution. I had requested Richland because it is located in my hometown. This was my desire because I could look forward to the benefits of being nearer to home – more visits, less money on phone calls and more money on my books.

After being in Richland for only seventeen days, without any warning and with no explanation, I was moved to Marion Correctional Institution. Immediately upon my arrival I knew that I did not want to remain at Marion Correctional. However, I believed in God’s ability to demonstrate His delivering power and bring me out *or* for His sustaining power to see me through. It was the latter that was revealed to me as God’s divine plan. While still at Richland, I had prayed for more knowledge of computers in preparation for employment upon release. Once settled at Marion, the job I was assigned was performing graphic design on computers. Almighty God had used the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections to answer my prayer and

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## COMING UP IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER:

- ♥ Another incredible Stand In The Gap,<sup>tm</sup> story – A Miracle In The Making
- ♥ The Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> experience of Jonathan Burnside, Law Professor in Bristol, England and author of a new book entitled: *My Brother's Keeper*

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- † Expansion of Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> into Ohio prisons for youthful offenders
- † New funding sources
- † Program Directors for:
  - Stand In The Gap,<sup>tm</sup> Ohio (SITG)
  - Opening Doors prison programs
- † Contractual Relationships with Licensed Professionals to support SITG,<sup>tm</sup> Ohio
- † Corporate cooperative partnerships to expand Opening Doors In The Workplace<sup>sm</sup>
- † Expansion of prison prayer teams and Prayers For Prisoners<sup>sm</sup> ministry

## VOLUNTEER NEEDS:

- ◆ Program facilitators for adult and youth inmate programs and staff programs
- ◆ Prayer partners
- ◆ Coordinator for inmate prayer requests
- ◆ (Thank you to Velma Cordial who recently volunteered to catch up our backlog of program evaluation summaries!)

just to name a few. As a team we made a list of goals and needs and began to pray and watch God move. Some prayers were answered real specific and that was a new experience, but way cool. Today, 3 years later, my youngest son, now 14, lives with me full time. My 2 oldest children live in the same town and we are in each other lives allowing God to be at work healing our relationship. Eileen and I are still the best of friends and we pray to go into the prisons and serve together. We are also in a season of prayer

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***At one time in my life, I was so addicted that I did not get out of bed without a shot of dope. Today I am free!***

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to form a new Stand In The Gap<sup>tm</sup> team. This time I will co-lead and help a neighbor as I have been helped. I am so thankful. The Lord has done much in my life. From my walk into the prison, my meeting of Eileen at the Kairos table, and then from prison to transitional housing, on to Stand In The Gap<sup>sm</sup>, and now to my own place with my children in my life, the Lord has restored so much. The Lord has never forsaken me and He loved me so much. He surrounded me with a fortress of prayer warriors. The way He has used Eileen in my life to walk with me and be a friend awes me. Eileen obeyed the Lord's calling and thru her obedience I am where I am today. At one time in my life, I was so addicted that I did not get out of bed without a shot of dope. Today I am free! I am thankful for Eileen and the SITG<sup>tm</sup> team along with many other servants of the Lord that have helped me to be where I am today. There is hope no matter where a person is or what they are going thru, if they will let Jesus be their hope. ♥

*Editor's Note: This article was written by Rhonda Poteet, one of the SITG<sup>tm</sup> "neighbors" we met while we were in Tulsa. She is much more than just another "neighbor in need" however. Rhonda reflects the love of Christ and the Spirit of the living God more than most people I know. I consider it a privilege to have met her. As our Spirits connected we became instant friends and lifetime prayer partners. What a testimony to how the love of God works.*

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to provide me with a spring of water – an oasis. The job at Marion was only one of many oases that God provided to nurture me, to nourish me and to sustain me.

God's oasis always speaks the same words to me, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose."  
- Willie Bond

Scripture References: Isaiah 49: 8-18 Psalm 62  
1 Corinthians 4: 1-13 and Matthew 6:24-34

Minister Willie S. Bond: While awaiting trial in Richland County Jail, I dedicated my life to Jesus, and through His redeeming grace, my life has not been the same. He has truly opened doors that I could not see.

**Editor's Note:** Willie was one of two inside facilitator's for the very first Opening Doors program at Marion Correctional in May, 2001. He willingly sacrificed the completion of Facilitator Training for another program in order to support the new work of Opening Doors. He added much to the success of that first program and for his sacrifice I am immensely grateful. Willie is employed at a Mansfield Halfway House where he is able to support and encourage others in their transition from prison to the community. He is currently preparing for his Elder's exam.

## HEARING FROM YOU

If you have suggestions or questions for us or if you know of someone else who would appreciate receiving our Newsletter, please e-mail me at the address below. Because we believe good stewardship of our resources is important, please inform us should you decide you no longer want to receive our Newsletter. We will honor your request by removing your name from our mailing list.

Deborah L. Roeger,  
Executive Director

**P.S.** For our continuing readers, please keep us informed of any address changes so that you won't miss future issues of our Newsletter. Just knowing you are there and you care is a great encouragement to us and our growing group of volunteers.

Contact Information: [openingdoors@columbus.rr.com](mailto:openingdoors@columbus.rr.com)

**\*\*Watch for an announcement of our new e-mail address\*\***

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